



Progress Report

July 2005 through June 2007



Investing in South Carolina's Future



Randall Smith of Lake Marion High School wins First Place in the "Public Speaking Contest" at the annual JAG-SC Leadership Conference in Columbia, February 2007.



Lateya Anderson of Rock Hill High School (left) receives a First Place trophy in the Employability Skills Contest from State Workforce Investment Board JAG-SC Subcommittee Chairperson Sylvia Hanna at the annual JAG-SC Leadership Conference in Columbia, February 2007.

Two years ago, the State Workforce Investment Board, at the request of Governor Mark Sanford, funded a pilot program to increase the number of high school graduates in our state.

The program, Jobs for America's Graduates-South Carolina (JAG-SC) is based on the highly successful Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) national model. JAG-SC provides an intensive, multi-year program aimed at high school youth who hold academic promise, yet face challenges to educational achievement. The program uses nationally proven strategies to help students graduate from high school and develop the skills needed in today's workplace. The curriculum was developed through a public-private collaboration of business, government and education and aims to better equip these youth with the positive behaviors and skills that employers need and want.

JAG-SC is an important element of South Carolina's overall Workforce Development strategy. High school graduation plays a critical role in the future earning potential of South Carolina's youth. The future impact of this economic reality extends beyond the individuals to their families and the communities in which they live.

This report, released at the mid-point of the JAG-SC project, documents signs of the pilot's success. Due to these results the State Workforce Investment Board, with Governor Mark Sanford's support, has committed \$1,000,000 of the State's federal Workforce Investment Act annual funding for the next three years to continue the pilot program. Our early outcomes indicate this investment in tomorrow's workforce promises to yield rich dividends for the students, as well as for our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Pat Hudson".

Pat Hudson

Chairman, Governor's Workforce Investment Board

JAG-SC's mission is to assist at-risk and disadvantaged youth to graduate from high school and find entry-level employment that leads to increasingly advanced career opportunities through a state-supported education and employment system.

Student Achievement

The initial two years of the five-year pilot program have proved to be successful for the Jobs for America's Graduates-South Carolina (JAG-SC) students, with 95% of them staying in school. After two years in the program, JAG-SC tenth graders have reduced their absences by 41%, and their suspensions by 35% on average. In addition, JAG-SC students increased their GPA by at least 9% each year and passed 6% more classes.



Participants at the annual JAG-SC Leadership Conference held in Columbia, February 2007.

S t u d e n t A c h i e v e m e n t

After one year in JAG-SC, the ninth graders, on average:

- Decreased absences by 13% from the previous year
- Increased GPA by 10% from the previous year

After two years in JAG-SC, the 10th graders, on average:

- Decreased absences by 41%
- Decreased suspensions by 35%
- Increased GPA by 9%
- Passed 6% more classes

**Each year, 95% of JAG-SC students
finished the school year.**

“Being a part of JAG-SC has changed my life.”

JAG-SC Pilot Overview

Jobs for America's Graduates-South Carolina (JAG-SC) currently operates in 14 schools in South Carolina. The program served 512 ninth-graders in 2005-2006 followed by an increase in enrollment to 630 during the 2006-2007 school term. The pilot's objective is to determine the impact of sustained support on the participants. Support continues throughout the high school experience and one year beyond graduation as students transition to post-secondary education or employment opportunities.

J A G - S C P i l o t P r o g r a m S c h o o l s

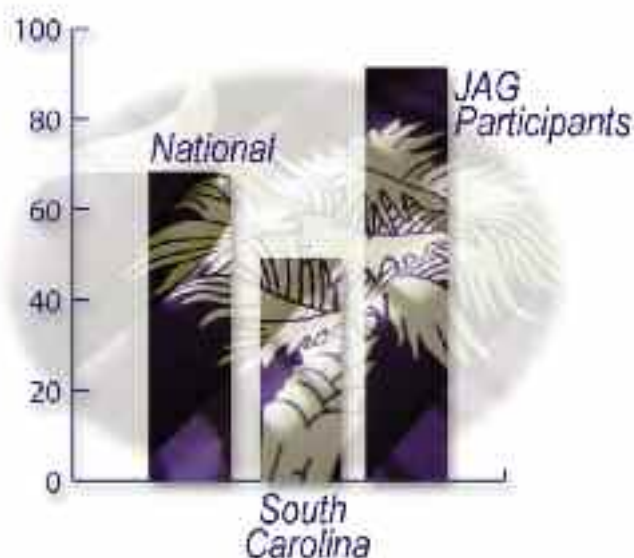
- 
- (A) Calhoun High School
 - (B) Chesnee High School
 - (C) Chester High School
 - (D) Creek Bridge High School
 - (E) Darlington High School
 - (F) Lake Marion High School
 - (G) Lancaster High School
 - (H) Manning High School
 - (I) McCormick High School
 - (J) Rock Hill High School
 - (K) Swansea High School
 - (L) Timmonsville High School
 - (M) Wade Hampton High School
 - (N) Woodmont High School

*“JAG-SC has informed me about many careers in the United States.
I’ve also learned about working together and leadership skills.”*

How Was JAG-SC Developed?

High graduation rates produce multi-faceted positive outcomes for the student, as well as for the community and the state. JAG research reveals that a typical state recoups the cost of supporting one participant within 16 months of the student's graduation and employment through his or her payroll contributions and sales taxes.

*High School
Graduation
Rates (%)*



National Recognition



JAG-SC's national award for an "Extraordinary Return to School Rate of 95%" is accepted on the program's behalf by Stacey Mills, Woodmont High School (4th from left). President and CEO of the national JAG program, Ken Smith, is on the far left.

Jobs for America's Graduates-South Carolina (JAG-SC) is an affiliate of the highly successful, results-driven, national program, Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG). JAG's 27-year track record of exemplary programming for youth has gained the attention of the U.S. Department of Labor. In fact, Assistant Secretary Emily DeRocco has cited the program as one to be emulated. JAG's affiliated state programs maintain a graduation rate of 90%.

In its first two years, Jobs for America's Graduates-South Carolina (JAG-SC) has received national recognition by JAG for its positive results. JAG-SC was recognized as a "Top 5 High Performing State Organization" based on the program's 95% return-to-school rate for the JAG-SC Class of 2005. JAG also recognized the achievement of several local programs and individual JAG-SC Specialists among the 14 participating schools in South Carolina.

National Award Winning Schools and Specialists:

- William Sumerel, Chesnee High School
- Dorothy Fore, Creek Bridge High School
- Noreen Wingate, Darlington High School
- Cassandra Jamison, Lake Marion High School
- LaTonya Leverette-Houston, McCormick High School
- Letitia Dowling, Swansea High School
- Terry Sanders, Wade Hampton High School

Comprehensive Support



JAG-SC students peruse career information booths at the annual JAG-SC Leadership Conference in Columbia, February 2007.

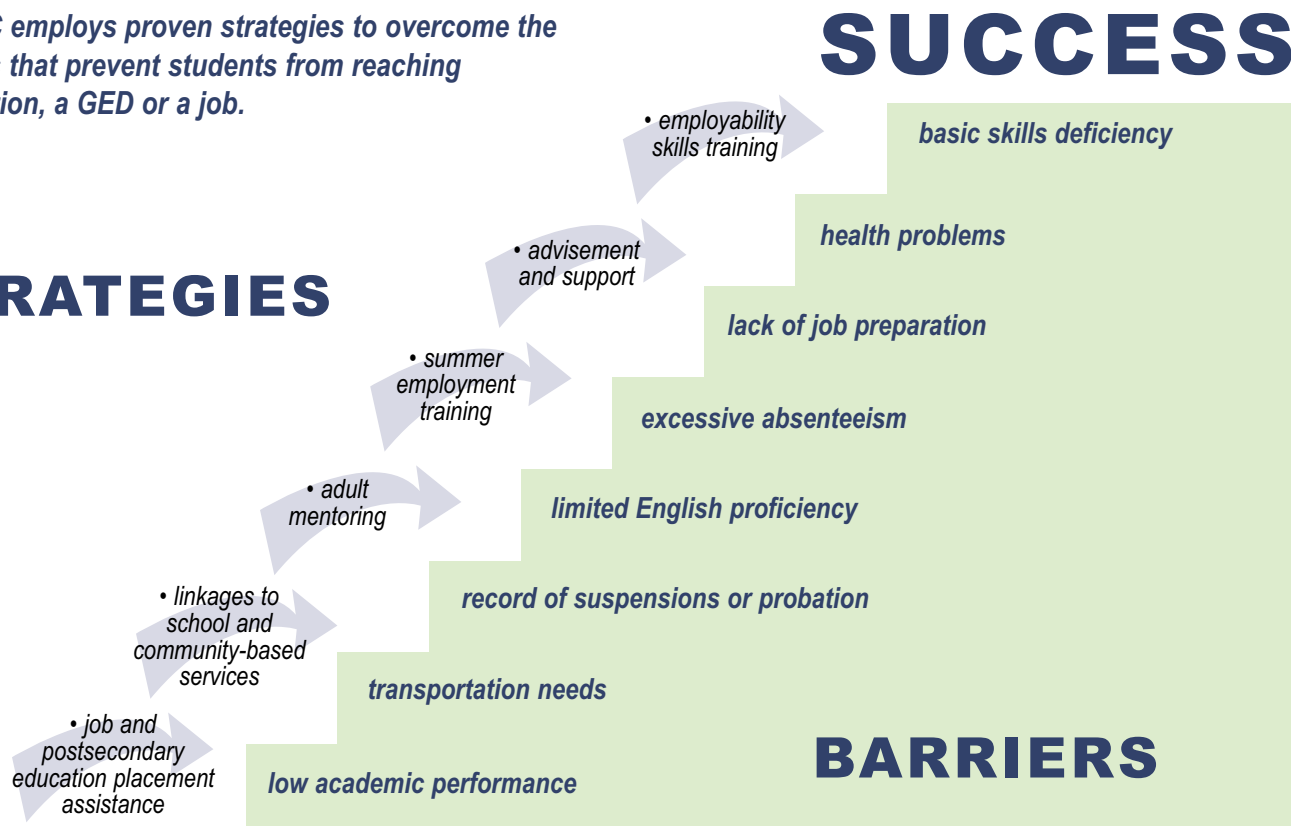
Jobs for America's Graduates-South Carolina's (JAG-SC) focus on fostering academic success is supplemented by a strong career-readiness component. A core employability skills curriculum is reinforced through developing business partnerships and providing opportunities for students such as internships, mentoring, guest speakers and summer and post-graduation employment options.

Under the direction of a Job Specialist at each school, participants review basic skills concurrently with an introduction to job-ready competencies during their first two years. Over the course of the pilot project, students will master 81 competencies identified by business as essential to successful employment. They also will continue to be supported by a Job Specialist who will coach, guide, counsel, mentor and advocate on their behalf with school administrators.

JAG-SC is a comprehensive program that reaches beyond the classroom to reduce barriers that prevent academic success and provide students with a structured path to graduation and employment.

JAG-SC employs proven strategies to overcome the barriers that prevent students from reaching graduation, a GED or a job.

STRATEGIES



“JAG-SC has helped me improve my business and people skills.”

“JAG-SC makes me think more about my future every day. It motivates me to be successful and work hard for the best I can achieve.”

Character Education

Students in Jobs for America's Graduates-South Carolina (JAG-SC) participate in a student-led career association that reinforces the development of leadership, communication and personal accountability.

Students also perform community service. Over the course of the first two pilot years, the average student gave 36 hours to his/her community through activities such as visiting nursing homes, maintaining the cleanliness of local highways, bringing “Teddy Bears of Love” to the patients of McLeod Children's Hospital and facilitating games and activities for young children at the YMCA on Halloween.



YMCA Halloween Festival—Rock Hill High School



Adopt-A-Highway Project—Manning High School



Workshop at the annual JAG-SC Leadership Conference in Columbia, February 2007.

“Being a part of JAG-SC has made me feel like I have a purpose for living. JAG-SC has made a change in my behavior and my attitude.”



For more information,
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